Numb. 814

The *UNIVERSAL SPECTATOR*, AND WEEKLY JOURNAL.

By Henry Stonecastle, of *Lincoln's-Inn*, *Esq*;

SATURDAY May 12, 1744.

To the AUTHOR *of the* UNIVERSAL SPECTATOR.

Mr. STONECASTLE,

IN one of your *Speculations*, some Time ago, you mention'd an *Edict* of *Henry* IV, King of *France*, against the *wearing of Gold and Silver Lace* upon Apparel. I believe you had then forgot an Eſſay of *Montaigne* concerning *ſumptuary Laws*, wherein we have a pretty deal to the ſame Purpoſe: So much, that if the *Edict* above mention'd was *really iſſued*, I ſhould imagine the *King* was beholden for his Thought to the *Philoſopher*. When there is ſuch Occaſion as at preſent, to diſcountenance *Extravagance in Expence*, I cannot but think every Thing tending that Way will be *uſeful* to the Publick.

Montaigne is of Opinion, that the Manner in which *Laws* have been deſign'd to *moderate the Luxury* of the *Table* and of *Dreſs*, are directly contrary to their End. He is not for any *Penalty* to reſtrain it; but ſays, the beſt Method would be to raiſe a *Contempt* of the *wearing of Gold or Silver*, as uſeleſs Things, whoſe *Worth* depends entirely upon our *Eſtimation*.

To allow none but *Perſons of Fortune* to eat *Delicacies*, or to *wear Velvets* and *Tiſſues*, and interdict them to the *common People*, what is it but to give them *Reputation*, and increaſe the *Deſire* of having them? *Princes*, in Matters of this Nature, m[illegible] do more by *Example* than they can by *Prec*[illegible] would they begin to le[illegible] *ſuperfluous Expences*, [illegible] all follow them, and the *people* would ſoon ape the *Courtiers*; ſo that *without* Law, Ordinance, Poclamation, or Act of Parliament, we ſhould *voluntarily become parſimonious*. This, at leaſt, is the Opinion of our *witty Eſſayiſt*, who goes on to the following Effect.

The *Statutes* ſhould ſpeak a quite contrary Voice to that of Prohibition to the *Poor only*. 'No *Man* or *Woman*, of what Quality ſoever, ſhould, upon Pain of great Forfeitures, be ſuffer'd to wear what the Government would diſcourage, except *Strolling Players*, and *Common Strumpets*.'—This *Thought* was undoubtedly the Foundation of *Henry's Ordinance*, having been publiſhed ſome Years before his Reign.

With ſuch an Edict did *Zaleucus* formerly correct the licentious Manners of the *Locrines*: 'Be it enacted, ſays 'his Statute, that no *Free Woman* ſhall have more than 'one *Maid* to follow her when ſhe goes abroad, except 'ſhe be drunk: Nor ſhall any Woman go *out of the City* 'by Night, or wear either *Gold*, *Jewels*, or *Embroidery*, 'unleſs ſhe be a *profeſſed public Whore*.'—He alſo decreed, that, 'except *Bullies* and *Brothel-Houſe-keepers*, no Man 'ſhould wear either *rich Garments*, or *Rings* upon his 'Fingers.'—By ſuch *contemptuous Exceptions*, our Author obſerves, he ingeniouſly drew off his Fellow Citizens from *vain Superfluities*, and *pernicious Dainties*.

Plato, in his *Laws*, lays it down for a Maxim, that nothing can be more hurtful in a Commonwealth, than for *Youth* to have the Reins of *Liberty* in their *own Hands*; to be ſuffered frequently to *change their Faſhions*, and run after *new Devices*. As human Nature is at all Times the *ſame*, It may be worth while to conſider if *ſuch Extravagancies* do not deſerve ſome Notice in the *Monarchy of Britain*, as well as they did in the *Republick of Athens*.

Yours, &c.

PLAINLOVE.

From my own APARTMENT.

I Am entirely of this Gentleman's Opinion, both as to the *Neceſſity* in general of ſome Stop being put to the Taſte for *Expence* and *Luxury*, that prevails in the preſent Age, and as to the *Means of effecting it* rather by making the Thing *ridiculous* and *contemptible*, than *penal*. It is indeed a great Pity that to ſhew the *Evil Tendency* and *fatal Conſequences* of it, ſhould not be ſufficient to divert from any *bad Habit*: But the Fact is certainly true that *it is not*, and therefore it is neceſſary to treat Human Nature as ſhe *appears*, not as we would *conceive of her* according to a perfect Idea.

We find it has been the ſame in all Ages, and that Authors *ſucceeded* or *failed* as they were more or leſs acquainted with this *Secret of their own Minds*. *Horace* knew it well, and therefore is to this Day read with more *Pleaſure* than any other *Roman Satirift*: *Boileau* hit upon ſomewhat of the *ſame Manner*, and by that Means obtained the Character of being the *fineſt Genius* in *France*; and we know how much the *greateſt of Engliſh* Poets owes of his *lateſt* and *higheſt Reputation* to the ſame *curious Happineſs*. The Names of this kind are but few among the *Men of Power*, any more than among the *Men of Wit*: But a *Zeleucus* or a *Henry* IV, who gives the *Royal Satire* this Turn againſt *Vice* or *Folly*, deſerves as honourable a Place on the Bench of *Princes*, as the *Roman*, the *French*, or the *Engliſh Poet* enjoys among the Reſt of his *reſpective Nation*.

The Countenance given by Men of *ſuperior Birth*, *Fortune*, or *Underſtanding*, to any Cuſtom that *degrades Human Nature*, will always have more Effect to *ſupport*, than the moſt ſevere Laws will have to *ſuppreſs it*. Would ſuch Perſons ſcorn to aſſociate with thoſe who are *famous* for ſome *infamous Excellence*, the Taſte of the *ſervile Imitators* would ſoon take a different Turn. Would they deſpiſe *Vanity* and *Senſuality*, the Incentives to that Extravagance in *Dreſs* and *Diſhes* which our *French* Eſſayiſt condemns, we ſhould find very few that would make to themſelves a *Merit* of being *vain* or *ſenſual*; and thoſe who *did*, would be look'd upon with *Contempt* by the Reſt of Mankind.

Montaigne, the Author my Correſpondent has had recourſe to, affords ſuch a *Miſcellany of Entertainment* to a Perſon who reads in [illegible] (as I did on the *preſent Occaſion*) that it is hardly poſſible of a ſudden to turn the Thoughts upon any *other Writer*. I remember it is a ſaying of ſomebody, that if *all the Books* in the World were to be *deſtroy'd*, except the Bible and *two more*, he would chuſe that thoſe two ſhould be *Plutarch* and *Montaigne*, both of them famous in the *miſcellaneous* Way of Writing. This will excuſe me for concluding my Paper with a few more *Remarks* from the *latter* of theſe Gentlemen.

Among the *Titles* of his Eſſays, who, that had never ſeen them, would think that this ſhould be one?

CHAP. XXVI. Of THUMBS.

It is very *ſhort*, and the Reader will ſee that I do not quite deviate from my *Correſpondent's Deſign* in giving the Subſtance of it at this Time of *military Preparations*.

He tells us *Tacitus* reports, that among certain barbarous Kings, for the Confirmation of an *inviolable Covenant*, the Manner was, to join their *right Hands* cloſe and firm together, and *clench their Thumbs round each other*: And when by *hard preſſing* the Blood appeared at their Ends, they made a *gentle Puncture*, and mutually *ſuck'd* one another's *Blood*. Phyſicians ſay Thumbs are the *Maſter-Fingers* of the Hand, and that their *Latin* Etymology comes from *pollere*, *to be able*. The *Grecians* call the Thumb by a Name which ſignifies *another Hand*: And it ſeems the *Latins* ſometimes took it in that Senſe, for a *whole Hand*.

The Example he brings from Martial *to confirm this, I chuſe neither to inſert nor tranſlate.*

It was in *Rome* a Sign of Favour to *wring and kiſs the Thumbs*.

Fautor utroque tuum laudabit Pollice Ludum. HOR.

The Fav'rer praiſe thy Play with both his Thumbs:

And of Diſfavour to *lift them up*, and *turn them away*.

——— *Converſo Pollice Vulgi*
Quemlibet occidunt populariter ———

With Thumbs averſe the Vulgar popularly kill.

Such as were *diſabled in their Thumbs*, were by the *Roman* excuſed from going to War, becauſe they had *loſt the Grap* of their Weapons. *Auguſtus* confiſcated the Goods of a Roman Knight, who had *wantonly cut off the Thumbs* of his two Boys, to prevent their ever going into the Service. And before him, in the Time of the *Italian* Wars, the *Senate* condemned *Caius Vatienus* to perpetual Impriſonment, and confiſcated all his Effects, becauſe he had *cut off the Thumb of his Left Hand* to exempt him from the Campaign.

One whoſe Name I have forgot, having gained a great Victory by Sea, cauſed all his Captive Enemies to have *their Thumbs cut off*, to deprive them of the Power either of *fighting*, or *handling their Oars*. The *Athenians diſ-thumb'd* the People of *Egineta*, to take from them their Preheminence in the Art of *Navigation*. In *Lacedæmon*, Maſters puniſhed their Scholars by *tying their Thumbs*.

Thus far our Author. We might add to his Caſes the *Engliſh* judiciary Cuſtom of *tying the Thumbs of a Criminal*, who refuſes to plead to his Indictment.

But I take Notice of *this Chapter* chiefly in regard to an Article or two in the *public Prints*, and others that have been reported ſince the *preſent Preſs*. Several ſtout Fellows, it ſeems, and one of them a *Theatrical Boxer* too, have *cut off* ſome their *Fingers*, ſome their *Thumbs*, to excuſe them at this Time of *Exigency* from his *Majeſty's Service*.

Whether it has had the *Effect* or no, I have not been informed: But if every *able Hand*, that has been thus *voluntarily deprived of a Thumb*, were *ſtigmatized*, and the Perſon rendered an Object of *indelible Contempt* among the meaneſt of his own Rank, I queſtion if any *Coward* in the Kingdom would be *brave enough* to diſmember himſelf for Fear of Danger. *Shame* might effect what *natural Courage* could not, which would be making it anſwer a *virtuous End*, according to Mr. PLAINLOVE's *Project*.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

Peterſbourg, *April* 18. We are aſſur'd, that the Empreſs has plainly told the Marquiſs de la Chetardie, that ſhe will be ready to treat with the French Court, as ſoon as it ſhall appear to her that his Moſt Chriſtian Majeſty aims at nothing elſe but interpoſing his good Offices to compromiſe the Differences that have kindled up the War, and makes no other Propoſals but ſuch as may conduce to that ſalutary End; which ſhews that her Imperial Majeſty will never ſwerve from her cloſe Engagements with the Courts of London and Vienna——Of this we have a Confirmation in the following Article from Moſcow, if either may be credited.

Moſcow, *April* 14. All the late Reports concerning the Marquiſs de la Chetardie, are very much to be queſtion'd. His Excellency is not better look'd upon at Court than the other Foreign Miniſters, and the Negotiations for an Alliance between France, the Northern Powers, and Pruſſia, are not in greater Forwardneſs than they were on the Day he arriv'd here, the Empreſs not having yet even nam'd Commiſſaries to confer with this Miniſter. It is true, he has made ſome Overtures to Count Beſtucheff, the Vice-Chancellor; but the Count gave him to underſtand, that he could not receive any Propoſals from him, until he had preſented his Credentials to her Imperial Majeſty at a publick Audience, and given her the Titles which ſhe ſo juſtly pretends to. Since the Arrival of the Lord Tyrawley, the French Embaſſador has very much alter'd his Tone, ſeeing the great Regard which the Court and every body has for the Britiſh Miniſter, beſides that, independently of Treaties, the Intereſt of Commerce muſt always be a Means to unite Ruſſia and Great Britain.

Stockholm, *April* 27. Count Sparre, who had been ſent to Moſcow, to communicate to that Court the Accommodation concluded between Sweden and Denmark, is come back with the Empreſs's Anſwer, who approves the ſaid Accommodation in every Article: Her Imperial Majeſty alſo offers, at the ſame time, to leave her Troops in this Kingdom, the better to provide for its Safety upon any unforeſeen Event.——And why not, ſince poor Sweden is in ſuch imminent Danger of being ſwallow'd up by *ſo formidable* a Neighbour as Denmark.

Vienna, April 21. It is reported here, that the Bavarian (Imperial) Troops, who are actually in Motion, wanted to throw themselves into Philipsbourg, after having propos'd the Thing to the States of the Empire, but that it has been absolutely refus'd.

We hear that the Court has at last resolv'd to inflict severe Punishments on the Authors of the Revolt of the Peasants in Bavaria, who, being spirited up by the House of Austria's Enemies, had form'd the Design of taking up Arms, in order to massacre our Troops as soon as they should separate and march out of their Quarters: This Plot was happily discover'd Time enough to prevent the Execution of it.

Vienna, April 26. We are assur'd that General Bernclau is to have a pretty large Body of Troops under his Command, consisting of Hussars, Croats and Pandoures, this General, as 'tis said, having been judg'd the most capable of executing an important Enterprize against our Enemies.

The Queen has sent a Rescript to her Ministers in the Empire, which, as 'tis believed, will be offer'd to the Dictatorship of the Dyet, as the former Rescripts were.

We are assur'd that the last Courier dispatch'd to the Veldt-Marshal Count Traun, carries positive Orders to that General to go and attack the Bavarian Troops that are actually assembling in the Neighbourhood of Philipsbourg.——'Tis observable of the Court of Vienna, that it is very seldom wanting in vigorous Resolutions, but generally wants Power to execute them.

Vienna, April 29. The last Letters from Constantinople bring Advice, that the Grand Signor having absolutely refused to grant Shah Nadir the Article relating to Mecca, Hostilities have been renew'd between them with greater Animosity than ever; that the Porte is making vast Preparations for carrying on the War vigorously, and that the Persians have actually laid Siege to Balsora.

Dresden, April 27. The 25th Instant a Courier arriv'd here from London, with a Letter for the King in his Britannick Majesty's own Hand Writing. The Purport of that Letter, as we hear, is to require his Majesty, as Elector of Saxony, to send forthwith to the Assistance of the Queen of Hungary the Troops which he is bound by Treaties to furnish her with, because the King of the Two Sicilies, in Contempt of the earnest Representations made to him and the Neutrality which he himself promised to observe, has openly declared in Favour of Spain: It is also said in that Letter, that these Troops shall be employed only in watching the Motions of the French, while England sends a few Men of War to the Coasts of Naples. Notwithstanding all the Preparations for the King's Journey to Poland, some People begin to say that his Majesty will not go thither 'till towards the End of the Year, because he has a Notion of employing his good Offices in order to facilitate a Peace between the Powers at War. Our Letters from the Empire frequently talk of a Confederacy of several Members of the Germanick Body, who, it seems, are ready to unite against the pernicious Designs of France; but they don't yet specify what Courts are to come into this Alliance. We know very well, that the most potent Princes of the Empire have hitherto manifested a great Attachment to the Emperor; so that we are of Opinion, that if Affairs do not take a new Turn in this Respect, the petty Courts will be restrained, as well through Fear as by Reason of their several opposite Interests, from taking vigorous Measures. In the mean Time we think a great Point has been gained in defeating the Project for a Neutral Army of the Empire, which was formed by the Courts of Francfort and Versailles, to the Prejudice of the Queen of Hungary and the whole Empire. We hear from Bohemia, that tho' all the Troops destined to make the Campaign are marched towards the Rhine and Bavaria, they are still erecting large Magazines in that Kingdom, and that they oblige the Inhabitants to lay up therein all the Corn that they do not absolutely want for their own Subsistence.

Berlin, May 2. We are assur'd, that since France declar'd War against England, the Court has sign'd a private Convention with the Earl of Hyndford, by which his Majesty engages to send into the Electorate of Hanover a Body of his Troops to secure it against any Invasion, but still upon this Condition, that the said Troops shall not be employ'd any where else, nor put upon any other Service. It is added, that when the British Minister demanded the Succours stipulated by the Treaty of Westminster, his Majesty made Answer, That that Treaty expressly imported, that he ought not to derogate from any anterior Treaty; and, moreover, that it was stipulated in the Treaty of Breslau, that his Majesty should observe an exact Neutrality in the present War, and therefore could not grant England any Assistance against France: But upon Lord Hyndford's representing, that this Step would be no Infraction of the Neutrality promis'd, the King at last agreed to march a Body of Troops to the Assistance of Hanover.

Francfort, May 7. Yesterday the Veldt-Marshal Count Seckendorff set out for the Camp near Philipsbourg, along with Count Keyserstein, General of the Artillery and Commissary-General. The other Generals actually about Court have receiv'd Orders to follow them immediately, his Imperial Majesty designing to have his Army assembled by the 10th Instant. The Army consists of 30,000 Men, and Marshal Coigny will speedily join it with 50,000 Troops, which Number is thought sufficient, tho' he can bring 80,000 Men over the Rhine, if requir'd: The French Train of Artillery consists of 90 Battering Pieces.

We are assur'd that the Austrians, whose Van Guard is already arriv'd at Heilbron, will lay a Bridge over the Rhine at Turkheim, and that they are actually gathering up the necessary Materials for that Purpose.

Turin, April 25. After we had repuls'd the Enemy on every Side, in the Affair of the 20th Instant, our General Officers having maturely weighed all Circumstances, unanimously resolved, with the Advice of Admiral Matthews himself, to retreat; which Resolution was so successfully executed, that our Troops shipp'd themselves off with many Necessaries besides the Artillery, and are now safely arriv'd at Oneglia, where they are to be reinforced by ten Battalions. Our Enemies are indeed Masters of the whole County of Nice, but there are still many high Mountains between them and Piedmont. ——So when Savoy was lost, they had still this Comfort left, that the Enemy had not yet broke into Piedmont.

Turin, May 4. We hear from Oneglia that all his Sardinian Majesty's Troops were safely landed, after a very tedious and stormy Navigation on the 29th past, at Port Maurice, a Place in that Neighbourhood belonging to the Republick of Genoa, having been convoy'd thither by some English Men of War. The French and Spaniards had compell'd 2000 Peasants to work at making the Roads fit for the Carriage of Cannon, and it was thought their Intention was to penetrate into Piedmont by Ceva, not daring to attempt it by the Riviere, whilst his Britannick Majesty's Squadron continued upon that Coast.

Turin, May 4. By Letters from Admiral Matthews, dated the 20th of April, O. S. from Vado Bay, there is an Account that the Admiral had taken above twenty Prizes since the French Declaration of War, some of which were from the Levant; that Capt. Goodyere, of the British Train of Artillery (who with two Lieutenants, and other Officers and People belonging to the Train were taken Prisoners at the Battery under Montalban) had, with two of the said Officers, been releas'd upon his Parole, and was return'd to the Fleet. We hear from Toulon, that M. de Court is disgraced, and has receiv'd Orders to repair to his Estate in the Country; and that the Lieutenant General, M. de Roche-Aland is appointed to command the French Fleet in his room.

Munin, May 10. Orders are given in the Castellany of Lisle to get ready 800 Waggons for the warlike Stores. It is reported that all this is destin'd for St. Omer, from whence we guess that the French have some Design upon Neuport and Ostend, or else that they have not yet laid aside the Expedition against England; which last Conjecture is not at all improbable, for it is positively affirm'd, that a new Embargo will be laid on at Dunkirk in a few Days. This Day a Report is spread that a Train of 100 Pieces of Cannon arriv'd Yesterday at Lisle, and that 800 Waggons above-mentioned will be ready by To-morrow at Eight o'Clock. The French King is expected there at the same time, or the next Day at farthest.

Paris, May 4. In order to destroy the Reports that have been spread on Occasion of the Lord Clinton's Stay in this Kingdom, the Ministry have insinuated to him, that his speedy Departure would be very agreeable to the Court. It is thought however, that this has been done only with a View to prevent certain Courts from suspecting ours on this Account.

A Report prevails, since the King's Departure, that his Majesty is going in the first Place to the Army in Flanders, after which he will take a Trip to Marshal Belleisle's Camp on the Moselle, and then proceed to the Army on the Rhine. It is also said, that the little Subordination that reigns in Marshal Noailles's Army is what has determin'd the King to go thither first, and that he has resolv'd to visit the other two Armies only with a View to restore, by his Presence, the good Order that is wanting in them.

The Troops under Marshal Noailles assembled the 29th of last Month in the Plain of Lentz, and those under the Count de Saxe also assembled on the same Day in the Neighbourhood of Valenciennes.

Paris, May 8 The 2d Instant, in the Evening a third Express arriv'd from the Prince of Conti, with Advice that the Citadel of Villafranca and the Fort of Mount Alban had surrender'd, and that the Garrisons of those two Places were made Prisoners of War; that 102 Pieces of Cannon were found therein, many of which had been buried in the Ground, the Enemy being unwilling they should fall into our Hands, and yet wanting Time to carry them off. Our Troops also got a great Quantity of warlike Stores in those Places, and likewise seiz'd one hundred Oxen on the Road to Villafranca, which were design'd for the English Fleet, the Drivers not knowing that that Town was in our Hands. Admiral Matthews lay under the Town with about 40 Men of War, but could give the Citadel no Relief; so that we took it without the Loss of a Man. The Engineers have drawn several Plains, whereby Nice and Villafranca may be soon made tenable and at a small Charge; in which Work the Prince of Conti employs the Troops that have gone through the least Fatigues. A Reinforcement of 10 Battalions is order'd to join his Serene Highness at Villafranca.

An Ordinance is just publish'd, whereby the King enjoins the English, Scotch and Irish, that are in this Kingdom, to take on in some one of the Irish Regiments, which are, Bulkley's, Clare's, Dallon's, Rotin's, and Berwick's, Infantry, and Fitz James's, Cavalry.

Brussels, May 8. We have just receiv'd Advice, that the Dutch Cavalry at Mons are marching out of that Town, and coming directly to Braine-le-Comte, in order to encamp there.

Yesterday Morning Prince Charles of Lorrain set out for the Army on the Rhine.

Hague, May 8. We are assured from Berlin, that on the Demand made by the Earl of Hyndford of the Succour stipulated by Treaties, his Prussian Majesty answer'd, that he was ready to grant it, and even to do something more, as soon as it shall appear to him that France was the Aggressor.——If that does not appear by this Time, it's hard to tell when it will; for that H———— stands but a poor Chance.

We hear from Francfort, that Copies of a Letter in French, on the present State of Affairs, are handed about there, in which the Author expatiates with a great deal of Freedom on the Proceedings and Designs of France. One of the Paragraphs, which deserves Notice, runs thus: 'If People have been bred to see, that [illegible] more Mention made of God, than [illegible] good and bad Success of Arms do not depend solely on him, they must have been edified in finding that the British Ministry have piqued themselves upon shewing in their Counter Declaration, that they believe in God, and in a requiting God, according to St. Paul. We are indebted for this Remark to a Man, who being far from a Bigot or Hypocrite, has also observ'd, that *Te Deum* is sung every where after a Victory, but that it is hardly any where but at Vienna that publick Prayers are put up to obtain the Favour and Protection of the Lord of Hosts, &c. —— The Remark upon the French Court is very just; but there was no Need of the Puff that follows it, since it is obvious that some People thought as little of the Lord of Hosts as their Neighbours do, 'till imminent Dangers began to convince them of the Wickedness and Folly of trusting to their own Wisdom and Strength.

Hague, May 10. The States of Holland and West-Friesland have just resolv'd upon a new Augmentation of 12,000 Men in the Land Forces, which Resolution is to be laid before the States General forthwith.

Hague, May 12. Last Saturday a Scotch Vessel coming from Montrose to Rotterdam, laden with Malt, was taken off of the Meuse by a Dunkirker, who thought fit to bring her up into that City. Their Arrival was no sooner known in the Town, but the People assembled by Multitudes about the Ship, and would have driven the Frenchmen out of her, if they had not cut their Hawsers, and laid her out of Reach in the Middle of the Canal. The French Agent, and the Commander of the Privateer, coming at the same time from the Agent's House, were so rudely receiv'd by the People, that they were both oblig'd to take Refuge in a neighbouring Church, where they were kept besieg'd, and would have been dislodg'd, if the Bailiff had not sent his Officers to rescue them. The Mob follow'd them wherever they went, even to the Presiding Burgomaster's House, till Midnight; and next Morning early the Prize was sent down to the Brille again with the Bailiff's Officers on board.

SCOTLAND.

Ferres, April 25. Upon the 14th of this Month died Ludovick Dunbar of Westfield, and his Corpse lay